December 16, 2025 White River Breach at Pacific: 120-Foot Failure Within 24 Hours of Desimone

Pillar: The Valley | **Basis:** Historical Event (Dated) | **Primary Source:** King County Flood Control District / USACE | **As Of:** 2026-11-16 (Recovery planning active)

At ~1:30 AM on December 16, 2025—under 24 hours after Desimone—aging HESCO barriers along the White River in Pacific failed across ~120 feet, impacting over 200 homes and forcing Mud Mountain Dam outflow reductions.

Operational Continuity & Corridor Facts

• Less than 24 hours after the Desimone breach in Tukwila, the White River levee system in Pacific failed at approximately 1:30 AM on Tuesday, December 16, 2025.

• High upstream releases from USACE's Mud Mountain Dam combined with years of sediment buildup overwhelmed aging temporary HESCO flood barriers across a ~120-foot gap.

• More than 200 homes were directly impacted under Level 3 'Go Now' evacuation orders before USACE cut Mud Mountain Dam outflows and crews plugged the gap.

• The King County Flood Control District noted the failed Pacific barriers were temporary structures well past their expected field life.

White River (Pacific) vs. Green River (Desimone) Dec 2025 Breaches

Dimension	Desimone (Tukwila)	White River (Pacific)	Operational Takeaway
Date & Time	Dec 15, 2025 (Afternoon)	Dec 16, 2025 (~1:30 AM)	Dual-basin failure within 24h
River & Dam	Green River / Hanson Dam	White River / Mud Mountain Dam	Both USACE Section 7 dams active
Structure Type	Permanent levee (2020 damage)	Aging temporary HESCO barriers	Interim fixes carry compound risk
Direct Impact	Industrial/comm, ~1,100 evac, SR 167	>200 homes, ~120-ft breach	South-end Auburn/Pacific pinch

Corridor Exposure, Triggers & Facility Actions

• For Auburn and south-valley aerospace suppliers, a White River breach threatens workforce commuting from Pierce County and north-south arterial redundancy.

• Simultaneous Green and White River emergencies split county, state, and USACE emergency-response crews across two basins at once.

• Track King County Flood Control District Executive Committee capital-project milestones for permanent Pacific corridor redesign.

Cross-Cluster Links & Primary Sources

• **WA Space Cluster Hub (#1382):** https://bcesg.org/washington-space-cluster-census/

• **Auburn WA Space Cluster Profile:** https://bcesg.org/auburn-wa-space-cluster-profile/

• **Kent WA Space Cluster Profile:** https://bcesg.org/kent-wa-space-cluster-profile/

• **Facilities / EHS Desk Brief:** https://bcesg.org/wa-space-role-facilities-ehs-desk-brief/

• **Facilities: Waste, PSCAA & Floodplain:** https://bcesg.org/wa-space-role-facilities-waste-pscaa-floodplain/

• **Components & Materials Continuity Exposure:** https://bcesg.org/wa-space-components-materials-continuity-exposure/

• **King County Flood Services:**
https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/nature-recreation/environment-ecology-conservation/flood-services

• **USACE Seattle District (DVIDS):** https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USACE-SD

• **City of Auburn Official Portal:** https://www.auburnwa.gov/

Provenance Note: Dated historical event (Dec 16, 2025). Distinguishes White River / Pacific residential impact from Green River industrial corridors.